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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON HIS MISSION OF GOOD OFFICES IN CYPRUS

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 17 of Security Council resolution 1146 (1997) of 23 December 1997. The report on those aspects of the resolution that relate to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) was submitted to the Council on 10 June (S/1998/488). The present report refers to my mission of good offices.

2. In the last report on my mission of good offices, dated 12 December 1997 (S/1997/973), I stated my commitment to continue the process of good offices following the elections in Cyprus in February 1998. Accompanied by Mr. Diego Cordovez, my Special Adviser on Cyprus, I met on 12 March with the permanent members of the Security Council. While expressing strong support for the Secretary-General's mission of good offices, the permanent members called for urgent action by the United Nations with a view to bringing about the earliest possible resumption of face-to-face talks between the parties.

3. The following day, on the eve of his trip to the region, my Special Adviser briefed the Security Council. He reported that both leaders had agreed to receive him, albeit separately, and stated that the main purpose of the visit was to explore the possibility of resuming face-to-face talks between the two leaders. Following the briefing, the President of the Council made an oral statement reiterating the Council's full support for the Secretary-General's mission of good offices and commending the efforts undertaken by Mr. Cordovez to that end. The Council expressed concern about the high levels of tension on the island and in the region and called upon both sides to take the practical steps necessary to move the negotiation process forward in an effective manner.

4. In letters addressed to the leaders of the two Cypriot communities, dated 26 February, I expressed my strong hope that both sides would spare no effort to reach an agreement with my Special Adviser on the necessary arrangements for a continuing and sustained process of direct negotiations. In two additional letters, delivered to the two leaders personally by Mr. Cordovez, I reiterated the importance I attached to revitalizing negotiations between the two Cypriot communities and called upon the leaders to work wholeheartedly with my Special Adviser to overcome the obstacles which for so long have impeded progress towards a principled and sustainable solution acceptable to the people of Cyprus and to the international community.

5. My Special Adviser visited the island a second time from 18 to 22 March. He met twice with Mr. Clerides, on 20 and 21 March, and three times with Mr. Denktash, on 19, 20 and 21 March. Mr. Clerides reiterated his readiness to resume direct talks under my auspices on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions. Mr. Denktash elaborated on his view that it was necessary to adopt a new approach based on the "acknowledgment of the existence of two fully functioning democratic States on the island". Mr. Denktash also requested my Special Adviser to convey his views to the Security Council, and expressed the wish that my Special Adviser arrange a meeting for him to convey this position to me directly. Mr. Cordovez undertook to arrange the meeting. On 28 March, I met with Mr. Denktash at Geneva at his request.

6. Following his visit to Cyprus, my Special Adviser was received in Ankara, by the Prime Minister of Turkey, who expressed his full support for my mission of good offices. A similar statement of support had been conveyed to Mr. Cordovez by the Prime Minister of Greece on an earlier occasion. On his return from Athens and Ankara, my Special Adviser briefed the special envoys and representatives at Geneva on 26 March.

7. On 20 April, in a letter addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/410), I reported on my meeting of 28 March with Mr. Denktash and sought any guidance the Council might wish to provide in support of my mission of good offices. On 19 May, in a short reply to my letter, the Council reiterated its strong support for my mission, on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions (S/1998/411).

8. In the course of the last six months, as in the past, my Special Adviser and I myself have kept in close touch with the various envoys and representatives involved, particularly those from the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Presidency of the European Union, as well as others with whom my Special Adviser meets regularly for purposes of consultation and cooperation. I should like once again to reiterate my appreciation to all the Governments that have appointed special envoys to assist my good offices mission. They have provided invaluable advice and support to my Special Adviser.

9. It is regrettable that, so far, all these efforts have not proved sufficient to lead to a resumption of the process. I strongly hope that all parties involved will abstain from any action which could further exacerbate tension and I count on their fullest support in the United Nations continuing efforts. In this context, in order to continue to explore possibilities that may lead to a new momentum, my Special Adviser on Cyprus intends to visit the island in the coming weeks.